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COMMUNICATION LINES AND CENTERS

489 Communications are quite well developed in this region, especially in Hopei Province where roads can be easily built because of the extensive plain. In northern Hopei Province the highways and railways converge on two main centers, Peking and Tientsin. Peking, the capital of the People's Republic of China, has a population of [62] over 2,000,000. Since the establishment of the Communist government, this historic metropolis has been undergoing extensive reconstruction. Around the Academy of Sciences (Academia Sinica) in the northwestern suburb of the city there is being developed a "cultural town" which upon completion will cover an area one-third larger than the old city itself. Among the dozens [543] of new construction projects in Peking, the Russian Exhibition Hall, opened in September 1954, is the most pretentious and most impressive. It is located outside Hsi-chih Gate in the northwest sector of the old city. The eastern and southern parts of Peking are sites of industrial plants.

496 From Peking one can travel northward to Inner
489 Mongolia via the Peking-Pao-t'ou Railway which passes through Kalgan. The latter is located on one of the historic routes traveled over the cen-

11/ Ch'eng Kuang-yü, Chung-kuo Tu-shih [The Cities of China], Taipei, Chung-hua wen-hua ch'u-pan shih-yeh wei-yüan-hui, 1953.

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146 Table 8 illustrates that the amounts of wheat flour rationed to various classes of workers are below normal dietary requirements as measured in terms of calories. Moreover, the people often cannot afford to buy their full ration at the prices fixed by the Communists, nor is there always an adequate amount of wheat flour on the market to provide even these minimum requirements.

XIV. COMMODITY FAIRS

- 543 In order to stimulate trade and facilitate the interflow of commodities between urban and rural areas, the Chinese Communists have held a series of "native products fairs" in some large cities in North China. Comparatively complete data on fairs held in the North China Region during 1952 are tabulated below.

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Table 9. Native Product Fairs in North China 1952*
(Unit - million. ¥ = yuan. \$ = U.S. dollars)

Fairs	Place	Total Trading Volume
North China Commodity Fair	Tientsin	¥ 745,400 (\$ 29.4)
North China Autumn Commodity Fair	Tientsin	¥5,628,500 (\$225.1)
Peking Commodity Fair	Peking	¥ 850,000 (\$34.0)
Changchiak'ou Commodity Fair	Changchiak'ou	¥ 130,000 (\$ 5.2)
Taiyuan Commodity Fair	Taiyuan	¥ 107,800 (\$4.3)

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Paoting Commodity Fair	Paoting	¥ 405,000 (c \$16.2)
Shihchiachuang Commodity Fair	Shihchiachuang	¥ 872,300 (\$34.9)
North China Native Products Fair	Tientsin	¥ 33,800 (\$1.3)
Total		¥8,772,800 (\$35.04)

* Economic Weekly, Shanghai, May 28, 1953, p. 7.

- 543 The total trade volume of the fairs listed above amounted to approximately US\$350.4 million. The "native products fairs" held at Tientsin during the course of 1952 accounted for an estimated 72 per cent of the total trade volume. Tientsin is the industrial and trade center of North China and most of the commodities produced in this region are sent to Tientsin for sale and distribution.

XV. CONCLUSION

- 489 Commodity movements between the four regions of China are by rail and by coastal shipping, with railways handling the greater volume of freight traffic. Transportation facilities between the various regions of China are, for the most part, by rail. The recent completion of the section of the Peking-Paot'ou Railway between Feng-tai and Sha-ch'eng will facilitate transportation and will be of special value to through-traffic between Peking and Moscow by way of the Chi-ning--Erhlien--Outer Mongolia Railway. The building of the new section between Feng-tai and Sha-ch'eng is considered of great importance -- a triumph of the present regime. Passenger and freight traffic has tripled since the summer of 1955.

PART 5. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER XVI

Yang Ke and Other Recreation

533 LOCAL TRADITION says that the poet Su Tung-p'o (1036-1101), when he
536 was the magistrate in Ting Hsien, wrote songs for the farmers to
543 sing while they were planting the rice fields watered by the Black and
White Dragon Springs, in the northwest part of the hsien. The Chinese
name for these songs is yang ke, green sprout or planting songs.

Local tradition does not say, nor does the memory of the oldest inhabitant recall, by what stages the yang ke moved from the rice fields onto the local stage, by what metamorphosis the original simple group songs became plays, with the dialogue generally sung and accompanied by music, nor how the singers changed from blue clad farmers into actors in costume performing for the pleasure and amusement of the people.

Nor does local tradition have an answer for another question: Why are the Ting Hsien yang ke different from those in other parts of the country? In some places they have kept their original character of simple folk songs. The Shanghai yang ke were street dances. In Peking the term was applied to the parade through the streets of actors on three or four foot stilts. There the chief actor, taking the part of a monk, led the procession and cleared a way through the crowd by swinging a long stick in front of him. The other characters were usually a regular fairly standardized group, a bearded man, a woman, a grandmother, a young man, a butterfly girl, a painted face, a stupid boy and his wife, military and civil attendants. The group sang short songs, played on the drums and gongs, made jokes and humorous remarks, and amused the crowd by their actions. In Shantung the yang ke stilt walkers used to be part of the entertainment at the temple fairs.

536 In the Experimental District we found five groups of yang ke players.
533 On a proportional basis, this would indicate a total of some 36 groups

346 Hsien, Sung Tzu, Niang Niang, Ts'ai Shen, Erh Lang, Sun Hou Tzu
771 the monkey god, Wen Shen, Hsüan T'an the god of riches, Shih Ch'ien,
and Hu Hsien the fox spirit.

776 The decree marked for suppression a large part of the Ting Hsien
178 temples, but, up to 1935, there seems to have been no serious effort to
enforce it in North China. It seemed then that, lacking governmental
pressure, the number of temples would probably diminish very gradu-
ally, that as the less popular temples fell into disrepair they would be
given up, but that the belief in the more popular deities was so wide-
spread and so deeply imbedded in the life of the people that it would
continue for a long time. What influence the war with Japan and the
Japanese occupation had on the religious life of Ting Hsien is un-
known.

Freedom of religion is part of the constitution of the new Central
People's Government, but it is reported that when the Communists
were in control of parts of Kiangsi province they destroyed all the
temples and shrines in the area. How many temples will survive in Ting
Hsien?

Temple Fairs

776 Fairs held to honor the gods and to present them with incense, feasts,
543 and entertainment combined religious worship, amusement, recreation,
business, and sociability. They were the largest public activities as-
sociated with any of the temples. Thousands of people came from neigh-
boring villages and even farther afield and there was great activity dur-
ing the three, four, or more days of the fair. Free theatrical performances
were regularly part of the program and were very popular.

Many of the fairs have a long history but we also found that new ones
were being organized at the time of our study.

While the fairs usually were held to honor one of the more popular
gods and worship was regularly part of the program, in at least one town
there were two annual fairs that had no religious connection.

543 Not every temple or every village or even every market village had a
369 fair. The city, two of its three suburbs, and 35 of the 453 towns and vil-
lages held fairs. How they were distributed throughout the hsien is
shown on the hsien map on page 5. The map also shows the month
when the fairs were held. Fifty was the total number reported. Six fairs
were listed in the city, four in one town, three in another, and two in

RELIGION

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another. Only one village had two fairs and they were both in the same month. 543 369

The third lunar month with 14 fairs and the second month with 12 were the most popular times for fairs. Sixty-two per cent were held in the first quarter of the year but only 4 per cent in the last quarter. There were no fairs in the 11th and 12th months. The sixth, seventh, and eighth month had only one fair each.

A fair was usually an all village activity with various committees taking charge of the necessary arrangements for the worship, for the theatricals, for the erection of the stage for the players and the mat shed for the spectators, for the selling booths, for the grouping of the various kinds of products offered for sale, for the collection of the necessary funds. For some fairs the money was collected from everyone in the village on the basis of their estimated wealth or the amount of land they owned. In others the money was collected from the shops and stores in the village and from the merchants coming for the fair. In still others an attempt was made to collect the cost of the fair from the visiting merchants and those who set up temporary booths. Only if these contributions left a deficit were the residents of the village asked to subscribe. If there was any surplus in the fair account it usually was added to the general fund of the village. 543

In most villages the fair was run by the group in charge of the village government, but in some it was in the hands of an entirely different group.

The cost of a fair lasting four days ordinarily varied from \$100 to \$150. The theatricals given for the entertainment of the gods and the visitors, except one or two caretakers who had to be left in each \$114, the main items were:

Theatrical troupe	\$60.00	Light and fuel	\$6.50
Tip for head of troupe	4.00	Entertainment of soldiers	8.00
Mat shed	17.00	Tax for entertainment	4.00
Stage	10.00	Miscellaneous	4.50

The Pei Ch'i fair was given to honor Han Tsu (see pages 420-21). His worship was the high point of the fair. On the evening of the 20th of the 3rd month practically the entire village of 326 families and their many visitors, except for one or two caretakers who had to be left in each house, went to the temple. Many devout worshippers kotowed every 543 776 78

543 ten steps from their home to the temple. They all spent the night in the temple sitting on the floor in front of the altar. The nearer one sat to the altar the better chance he would have to get a blessing from the god early in the morning.

776 In the morning a new robe was put on the god, he was fanned, incense was burned, and feasts were offered on the altar. Oil money was given for the god. Other contributions were put into the money box.

543 It was estimated that the shops and stalls and displays of goods for this fair covered 150 mu, 25 acres, and that the attendance was some 10,000 persons per day for four days. In the animal market some 2,400 head were sold. The shops and dealers at the 1927 fair were listed as:

Cloth	80	Bamboo articles	7	Tea shops	10
Silk	6	Reed curtains	7	Wine	5
Jewelry	30	Willow baskets	7	Miscellaneous food	30
Furs	15	Stone articles	3	Barbers	20
Imported goods	6	Winnowing machines	3	Fortune tellers	10
Brooms and dusters	50	Rolls	15	Peep shows	6
Iron goods	35	Noodles	12	Story tellers	5
Baskets	10	Bread	7	Chinese boxers	3
Fertilizer	10	Meat	14		
Drug shops	8				

Lumber and wood sellers covered an area of 10 mu. No count was made of dealers in agricultural implements.

753 Tung Wang, a village of 319 families, held its fair on the 15th-19th of the third month to honor the god Ch'eng Huang (see page 400). He was noted for his ability to cure disease and settle problems for his worshippers. The activities of the fair covered some 30 mu. The attendance was some 4,000 per day.

543 The fair in Yao Lu Chuang, a small village with only 51 families, was started in 1927, because so many people came to worship the spirit of a willow tree that stood at the edge of the village. The village head had wanted to cut the tree down to get some money for the village school but before it was done a man came and said that a god had appeared to him in a dream and had told him that the willow tree was about to be deified and that pieces of the tree would cure sickness. The news spread around. People came to worship. A man was cured. Then so many people came that the village organized a four day fair from the 2nd to the 5th of the 3rd month.

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RELIGION

The reputation of the tree was increased when a man who never believed in the willow tree god was struck with paralysis as he passed the tree, stayed there a day and had to be carried home. A sick man on a journey was impressed by the size of the tree. He stopped, kotowed, and prayed for help. The spirit of the tree cured him.

There was no temple near the tree so the village put up, for the fair days, a mat shed where the visitors could rest and an altar where they could pray. The names of those who contributed were written on yellow paper and pasted on the walls of the mat shed. The worshipers took pieces of the tree away with them. If the tree cured them they presented a board or a cloth scroll that was hung on the tree.

The fair covered some 30 mu of land and had an estimated attendance of some 4,000 a day. The shops listed were:

Cloth	5	Bread	3	Miscellaneous food	14
Jewelry	3	Noodles	3	Cigarettes	11
Paper flowers	3	Meat	3		
Toys	6	Tea	3	Barbers	2
Miscellaneous goods	6	Wine	3	Gambling	11

The Tung T'ing fall fair was first organized about 1921. It was held in the 9th month to supplement the spring fair held in the 1st month. There was no temple connected with the fair and no altar was set up for worship by the visitors.

This fair was next to the Pei Ch'i fair in size. It covered some 50 mu and drew some 5,000 visitors per day. About 1,000 animals were sold during the four days. There were 22 games of chance on the fair grounds, fish bowls from which to draw numbers, bamboo sticks to be shaken until one came out, and shell games. The report stated that there was not as much entertainment at Tung T'ing as at Pei Chi.

The shops at the fall fair were:

Cotton cloth	30	Carts	6	Tea	6
Silk	5	Willow twigs	6	Miscellaneous food	25
Fur lined coats	12	Boxes	5		
Jewelry	9	Paper flowers	5	Barbers	15
Imported goods	5			Fortune tellers	5
Iron	10	Rolls	8	Chinese boxers	3
Leather	7	Bread	3	Story tellers	3
Rugs	7	Meat	5	Gambling	22
Toys	7	Wine	3		

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543 One wonders whether the omission of worship by this lately organized fair points toward the gradual elimination of worship from the other fairs. It seems probable that the worship feature will continue, but with fewer and fewer worshipers. Even now by no means all of the people stop to burn a bundle of incense and bow in front of the altar before they enjoy the fair.

The fairs were a great opportunity for entertainment and recreation. They were also the occasion for the local people to sell their products and buy things brought in by itinerant merchants. They also brought considerable income to those who could rent quarters to visitors. It will be noted that farm products such as grain and vegetables were not listed as on sale at the fairs. The taxes collected on animals, wood, and other local products sold during the fair were a big item, but, as the tax collection privilege had been bought from the hsien, the amount collected at the fairs went to the tax collector rather than to the government tax office.

Some people complained that the expense of entertaining visiting friends and relatives who came for the fair was a heavy financial burden and was an annual item; also that there was a great temptation to spend more at the fair than the family budget could afford. The fairs also attracted thieves, pickpockets, confidence men, and gamblers.

The fairs were one of few occasions during the year when the entire family came out for recreation and entertainment and so were one of the few times that large numbers of women were seen abroad.

Religious Societies

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794 Besides the temples to which anyone could go for worship there were special Buddhist and Taoist societies with a limited membership. Only members were admitted to their meetings; there were special rules of conduct and abstinence for their members. Most of these organizations, especially the Taoist ones, had many of the characteristics of secret societies, with a ritual, dogma, and practice known only to their members. Consequently we have been able to secure only general information about them. As far as we could learn several societies may be represented in a given village, but a person can be a member of only one. In the 62 villages of the Experimental District we found one Buddhist and pine Taoist societies. At least six of the Taoist societies had both men and women members.